

### REMARKS

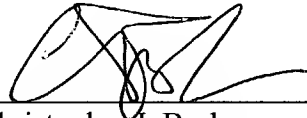
In this Preliminary Amendment, Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 26, and 38 are amended and new claims 39-44 are added. Hence, Claim 1-44 are pending in the present patent application. The amendments to the claims herein are made to more clearly and distinctly claim subject matter that the Applicant regards as his invention. No new matter is added. Entry is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that such contact would further the examination of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any fee shortages or credit any overages Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

HICKMAN PALERMO TRUONG & BECKER LLP



Christopher J. Brokaw

Reg. No. 45,620

Date: April 30, 2004

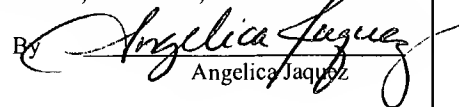
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### CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

On April 30, 2004

By

  
Angelica Jaquez

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